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Press Release

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Surprise \$70,000 Grant Opens Coatesville's Ash Park Pool (Coatesville, PA)

Bob and Jennifer McNeil will join the Brandywine Health Foundation this evening in announcing a surprise gift of \$70,000 to open Coatesville's Ash Park Pool this summer. The gift will be announced at the Foundation's annual Garden Party, held at the McNeil's home, with over 400 supporters in attendance.

The Foundation's outgoing Board Chair Al Eastburn announced the gift by saying, "Our goal is to make sure that every child is able to be active, especially during the hottest months of the year, and that they have the opportunity to learn how to swim so that drowning accidents can be minimized."

Due to budget problems, the City had announced that neither Ash Park's nor Palmer Park's pools would be able to open this summer. The Brandywine YMCA has come forward to help with scholarships for children in the area. However, the Foundation's Board joined the McNeils to support those children for whom the Ash Park facility (the larger of the two Coatesville pools) is their local and therefore more accessible swimming pool.

Coatesville City Manager Harry Walker responded to the gift by saying "We understand that the gift is for just this one year, to help us get through a tough financial situation. As the City Manager, I am going to make every effort to ensure that the City is able to incorporate the pool into next year's budget."

The gift received support from other quarters as well. Coatesville Area School District Superintendent, Richard Como, observed that "I have been concerned that children will not have

(more)

sufficient recreational activities during this summer. This gift is an example of how the Foundation has joined with individual donors like the McNeils to support a variety of new philanthropic initiatives in the Coatesville area. We've been pleased with the arrival of ChesPenn Health Services, Community Dental, and the Child Guidance Resource Center -- all bringing needed health care services to the children and families of western Chester County."

Also announced at the Garden Party will be the Foundation's new, more focused name. Previously this local public charity was called the Brandywine Health & Wellness Foundation. According to President and CEO, Frances Sheehan, "changing the name to the Brandywine Health Foundation reflects the Board of Directors' commitment to sharpening its focus on improving the health of our community. Focusing the Foundation's resources where we can have the greatest impact is essential for success."

The Ash Park Pool gift brings the Brandywine Health Foundation's total giving since it was founded in 2001, to over \$3.3 million. The Foundation's mission is to improve the health and well-being of the residents of central and western Chester County.

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